

Mission

Common

Area:**Description:**

Communications is the fundamental capability within disciplines and jurisdictions that practitioners need to perform the most routine and basic elements of their job functions. Agencies must be operable, meaning they must have sufficient wireless communications to meet their everyday internal requirements before they place value on being interoperable, meaning being able to work with other agencies.

**Knowledge Links****Related AEL Item(s)**

▶ 99 found; [click here to see all items](#)

Communications interoperability is the ability of public safety agencies (police, fire, [EMS](#)) and service agencies (public works, transportation, hospitals, etc.) to talk within and across agencies and jurisdictions via radio and associated communications systems, exchanging voice, data and/or video with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, when authorized. It is essential that public safety has the intra-agency operability it needs, and that it builds its systems toward interoperability.

Capability Elements:

Personnel

- Trained National Incident Medical System ([NIMS](#)) Incident Commanders
- Trained [NIMS](#) Communication Unit Leaders
- Trained communication technicians
- Trained Dispatch Personnel
- Public safety agency personnel oriented to equipment available to their agency
- Service Agency Personnel oriented to equipment available to their agency
- Planning
- Interoperability communications plans that provide governance, standard operating procedures (SOPs), technology, training and exercises, and usage for each participant area
- SOPs that clearly articulate the processes and protocols that personnel must follow to achieve interoperability during an incident
- PSAP and Public Safety Communications Center continuity of operations plan that ensures responders understand backup capacity protocol

Organization and Leadership

- Formalized structured planning and governing bodies are in place with their authorities,

- missions, and responsibilities defined
- Agreements exist between agencies (MOUs/ MOAs) regarding how to coordinate decision-making across agencies to ensure effective response

Training

- General orientation and education on interoperability equipment for all personnel who will respond to an event
- Routine use of interoperable equipment so participating area is accustomed to the equipment before an incident

Equipment and Systems

- A system-of-systems consisting of local, State, and Federal components is in place that can be connected through common interface standards
- Operable communication systems are in place for the disciplines and jurisdictions as defined by local requirements
- The Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP), from the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness ([SLGCP](#)) at [DHS](#), to assist localities

Exercises, Evaluations, and Corrective Actions

- Communication tabletop exercise
- Operational exercise

Linked Capabilities

- Communications is linked to all 36 target capabilities.

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